

## **SPLASH 2004: NOAA Ship McArthur Weekly Science Report**

5 August 2004

Jay Barlow, Cruise Leader

### **SCIENCE SUMMARY: Thursday, 29 July to Wednesday, 04 August 2004**

We left Kodiak last Friday morning after a rejuvenating port call. Some were, of course, made more juvenile than others. Fortunately, the rental car was pulled out of the mud and the rental company never suspected that their car might have been used as an off-road vehicle. I suppose they are used to seeing sprays of mud ... in the interior.

We began the longest offshore transect of the cruise ... almost 400 miles in a straight line. Our approach to linear travel was not so much a straight line as a random walk. Friday and Saturday we worked high densities of humpback whales off Kodiak Island and Albatross Banks. We covered a whopping 38 on-effort miles on those days, combined. However, even as we moved offshore, we continued to see humpbacks. They were never in the same densities we saw inshore, but we continued to see small patches of whales all the way to the end of our long offshore transect line.

In addition to humpback whales, we found three groups of killer whales. Two were seen on the same day (Wednesday) in offshore waters that were 2 miles deep. The offshore waters in the Peninsula region of Alaska are incredibly productive. Although the whales are much more spread out than in the shallow coastal waters, I would not be surprised if the total number of whales in this region is greater off the shelf than on it. Unfortunately, many of the offshore humpback whales were uncooperative or shy about showing their tails. The orcas were also difficult to approach or sample.

This week we have been making great strides in producing a SWFSC SPLASH catalog of whale flukes. Our goal is to finish this cruise with an internally matched catalog of at least 500 individual humpback whale flukes. Holly Fearnbach has been selecting fluke photographs and printing out 2"x3 1/2" images (8 per sheet). Cornelia Oedekoven and Siri Hakala have been cutting these out, assigning SWFSC numbers to all the unique whales, and have been assembling the catalog. Photos are put into plastic sleeves designed for baseball trading cards (team humpback – collect the whole set). So far, they have assigned SWFSC numbers 1 to 75, and that only includes whales seen through July 10!

### **RE-SIGHTING NEWS:**

Beth Goodwin found us another humpback match. One of the whales that we photographed outside of Prince William Sound (PWS) matched to an animal in the PWS Catalog (compiled by Olga Von Ziegesar, our own Beth Goodwin, and Rene Divito).

Beth recognized many of those cataloged whales by sight, and rumor has it that many of the whales now recognize Beth.

### **Sightings and Effort Summary for Marine Mammals**

Date	Start/Stop Time	Position	Total Distance	Avg. Beaufort
073004	1420	N57:43.16 W151:54.75	16.2 nmi	2.3
	2041	N57:22.88 W151:44.22		
073104	0619	N56:42.96 W152:15.68	32.0 nmi	1.9
	2047	N55:59.07 W152:52.37		
080104	0640	N55:17.50 W153:19.33	76.3 nmi	4.7
	2107	N53:51.79 W154:33.23		
080204	0605	N53:06.20 W154:53.16	67.1 nmi	3.7
	1711	N51:39.23 W155:53.24		
080304	0557	N52:00.55 W156:25.32	21.2 nmi	5.0
	1623	N53:01.21 W157:52.50		
080404	0559	N53:14.02 W158:05.83	20.8 nmi	2.8
	1656	N53:34.65 W158:25.62		

CODE	SPECIES	TOT#
037	Orcinus orca	3
046	Physeter macrocephalus	1
061	Ziphius cavirostris	1
074	Balaenoptera physalus	7
076	Megaptera novaeangliae	29
079	unid. large whale	3

TOTAL 44

note: Dall's & harbor porpoises and pinnipeds are not included.

### **Biopsies (Juan Carlos Salinas)**

Species	Weekly	Cumulative
Humpback whale	46	229
Fin whale	0	29
Blue whale	0	3
Sperm whale	0	4
Killer whale	0	17
Baird's beaked whale	0	3
Dall's porpoise	0	1
Cuvier's beaked whale*	0	1

\*dead when sampled

### **Photo-Project (Holly Fearnbach)**

Species	Weekly #	Cumulative #
Humpback whale		
Catalog-quality flukes	94	398
Fin whale dorsal IDs	2	44
Sperm whale fluke IDs	0	9
Blue whale dorsal IDs	0	3
Killer whale dorsal IDs	6	60
Baird's beaked whales	0	15
Northern right whale dolphins*	0	1
Pacific white-sided dolphins*	0	3
Cuvier's beaked whale (dead)	0	1
Steller sea lion	0	1

\*number of groups photographed

### **Acoustics Squeakly Report**

(none)

### **Oceanographic Operations (Lillian Stuart)**

Date	Number CTDs	
7/29	0	In port
7/30	1	
7/31	1	
8/01	1	
8/02	1	
8/03	1	
8/04	1	

### **Poetry Corner (by Siri Hakala, Poet Laureate Whannabe)**

The wind is howling,  
The see white-capped.  
I think we're overdue  
For a nap.

The ship has turned  
Into the glare.  
There's no way I'd see

A whale out there!

But we stay on effort,  
Hard-core observers.  
Rain soaked, comfy-  
Bed deserves.

Caribbean music,  
Wishful thinking.  
To be on a beach,  
Tropical drinking.

Oh there's a breach!  
Reticle five,  
Give me a camera!  
It's about to dive!

Out of my way,  
Everyone,  
Research is on!  
Ain't this fun?

Special note to Richard, Lilian, Kate, Robert and Julie .... We miss you guys!!!!